

# "UNVEILING THE FUTURE"

## Daniel 2:24-49

Accurate predictions of future events that have virtually no probability of occurring by coincidence are spectacular precisely because they seem so supernatural. Popular prognosticators like Nostradamus have entertained generations with their elaborate fortune-telling, despite their pitiful track records of inaccuracy.

Biblical prophecy is different from all other predictions. With incredible detail, forthright clarity, and impeccable accuracy, the [Bible](#) has consistently unveiled the future for centuries. With eye-opening precision, Daniel interpreted two sets of dreams, one by a pagan ruler (chapter 2) and the other by the prophet himself (chapter 7), thereby forecasting the entire course of Middle East history over the next five centuries.

Tonight, I want you to turn to Daniel 2. Even with the threat of a gruesome execution hanging over their heads, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were not shaken. Daniel used no astrology, no dream manuals, and didn't read any livers (*as other ancient diviners did to communicate with their lifeless gods*) to discover the content and meaning of the king's dream. He and his three godly friends sought the wisdom of the one, true God who answered their prayer.

**Daniel 2:19–23... Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; 20 Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him. 21 "It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding. 22 "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him. 23 "To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For You have given me**

**wisdom and power; Even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, For You have made known to us the king's matter."**

God answered their prayer. Now Daniel was ready to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar what God had revealed to him. Here's how it transpired. . .

**Daniel 2:24–30... Therefore, Daniel went in to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise men of Babylon; he went and spoke to him as follows: "Do not destroy the wise men of Babylon! Take me into the king's presence, and I will declare the interpretation to the king." 25 Then Arioch hurriedly brought Daniel into the king's presence and spoke to him as follows: "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can make the interpretation known to the king!" 26 The king said to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen and its interpretation?" 27 Daniel answered before the king and said, "As for the mystery about which the king has inquired, neither wise men, conjurers, magicians *nor* diviners are able to declare *it* to the king. 28 "However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days. This was your dream and the visions in your mind *while* on your bed. 29 "As for you, O king, *while* on your bed your thoughts turned to what would take place in the future; and He who reveals mysteries has made known to you what will take place. 30 "But as for me, this mystery has not been revealed to me for any wisdom residing in me more than *in* any *other* living man, but for the purpose of making the interpretation known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind.**

Daniel is ushered into the presence of King Nebuchadnezzar. His life, the lives of his trusted friends, and the lives of all the kings' spiritual advisers are hanging in the balance. Please notice that Daniel takes no credit whatsoever. He gives glory to the one true God. (**vs. 27-28**). He makes clear that God has revealed "what will take place in the latter days."

In addition to being able to reveal and interpret the dream, Daniel does another remarkable thing—the thing God's man should always do. He gives

all the credit to God. Daniel's success comes not because he has more wisdom than anyone living. Rather, this is all God's doing.<sup>1</sup>

## THE DREAM

**Daniel 2:31–34... "You, O king, were looking and behold, there was a single great statue; that statue, which was large and of extraordinary splendor, was standing in front of you, and its appearance was awesome. 32 "The head of that statue *was made* of fine gold, its breast and its arms of silver, its belly and its thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. 34 "You continued looking until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them.**

I wish I could have seen Nebuchadnezzar's eyes as Daniel described the dream down to its last detail. What had he seen? A huge statue that glimmered in the sun. Its appearance was fourfold:

- a head of gold
- chest and arms of silver
- stomach and thighs of bronze
- legs of iron with feet "partly iron and partly clay"

However, something happens to the statue—"*A stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and crushed them.*"

This is extremely important. Look carefully at verse 35. . .

**Daniel 2:35... "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed all at the same time and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that not a trace of them was found. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.**

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel L. Akin, [\*Exalting Jesus in Daniel\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2017), 23.

Then the whole statue or image crumbled *"and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors."* Gone. Disappeared. "Not a trace of them could be found." In stark contrast, "the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth" (v. 35). This is the dream God gave the Babylonian king.<sup>2</sup>

God still speaks today by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, through circumstances, and through godly believers. He has not left us clueless. Are you listening? Are you anxious to know the truth about the future?

## THE INTERPRETATION

**Daniel 2:36–38... "This was the dream; now we will tell its interpretation before the king. 37 "You, O king, are the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, the strength and the glory; 38 and wherever the sons of men dwell, or the beasts of the field, or the birds of the sky, He has given *them* into your hand and has caused you to rule over them all. You are the head of gold."**

Nebuchadnezzar's exalted status as king of the magnificent Babylonian Empire vast empire was a divine gift from the sovereign God. He is the head of gold. However, he would be followed by a succession of weak and incompetent rulers. The great Babylonian Empire would only last a mere sixty-six years (605–539 BC).<sup>3</sup>

**Daniel 2:39... "After you there will arise another kingdom inferior to you, then another third kingdom of bronze, which will rule over all the earth."**

The Medo-Persian Empire—the "breast and the arms of silver" (2:32). History is plain that this empire was led by the dynamic Cyrus the Great. The two arms conceivably represented the two parts or divisions of the empire.

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel L. Akin, [\*Exalting Jesus in Daniel\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2017), 23–24.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel L. Akin, [\*Exalting Jesus in Daniel\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2017), 24.

Medo-Persian dominance continued for approximately 208 years (539–331 B.C.).<sup>4</sup>

**Through the portrayal of each subsequent empire as inferior to its predecessor, Daniel seems to have been suggesting that the sinfulness of the world would continue to increase until the culmination of history.<sup>5</sup>**

The Empire of Greece was the *"belly and thighs"* (2:32). This kingdom will rule over all the earth and it would be led by Alexander the Great. He would conquer the known world and then die at the young age of thirty-three. This kingdom would last for 185 years (331–146 BC).

Next came the *"the legs of iron"* (2:33) This is the Roman Empire.

**Daniel 2:40... "Then there will be a fourth kingdom as strong as iron; inasmuch as iron crushes and shatters all things, so, like iron that breaks in pieces, it will crush and break all these in pieces."**

The iron legs represented the mighty Roman Empire. Rome became a world power when they won the Battle of Carthage. The Roman legions were fierce warriors. Notice, there are two legs. The Roman Empire had a western division centered in Rome and an eastern division centered in Constantinople (modern Istanbul). This empire was not replaced by another great world empire. It just crumbled from the inside.

Five terms are utilized in this verse (*"crushes," "shatters," "breaks in pieces," "crush," "break"*) to emphasize the tremendous power this fourth kingdom would exert. Rome ruled the nations with an iron hand and like a huge iron club shattered all who resisted its will.

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<sup>4</sup> Stephen R. Miller, [Daniel](#), vol. 18, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 93.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen R. Miller, [Daniel](#), vol. 18, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 94.

The Roman Empire dominated the world from the defeat of Carthage in 146 B.C. to the division of the East and West empires in A.D. 395, approximately five hundred years. The last Roman emperor ruled in the West until A.D. 476, and the Eastern division of the empire continued until A.D. 1453.<sup>6</sup>

**Daniel 2:41–43... “In that you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter’s clay and partly of iron, it will be a divided kingdom; but it will have in it the toughness of iron, inasmuch as you saw the iron mixed with common clay. 42 “As the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of pottery, so some of the kingdom will be strong and part of it will be brittle. 43 “And in that you saw the iron mixed with common clay, they will combine with one another in the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, even as iron does not combine with pottery.**

The empire that began as *iron* regressed to a state of *clay* mixed with *iron*. This mixture speaks of progressive weakness and deterioration. Keep this in mind. **Iron and clay will not adhere to each other.**

The Roman Empire was characterized by division and deterioration (it was *partly strong and partly brittle*). Though Rome succeeded in conquering the territories that came under its influence, it never could unite the peoples to form a united empire.<sup>7</sup>

Don’t miss the picture God granted to Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel. Here is a sweeping prophetic view of Gentile world powers. However, in the statue itself, you can see the instability and deterioration. Notice that the value of the materials decreases as you move down the statue. In reality, the statue is top-heavy. Gentile power will not last forever!

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<sup>6</sup> Stephen R. Miller, [Daniel](#), vol. 18, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 95.

<sup>7</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, [“Daniel,”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 1335–1336.

## THE STONE

**Daniel 2:44–45...** "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. **45** "Inasmuch as you saw that a stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it crushed the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold, the great God has made known to the king what will take place in the future; so the dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

Several features of the rock are obvious. . .

- Its origin was supernatural, for it was cut out of the mountain without human hands.
- The rock had extraordinary power, for it annihilated the statue.
- Its scope was worldwide as symbolized by the fact that it grew into a huge mountain and filled the earth.

In verses 44–45, Daniel identified this great rock as the coming kingdom of God, and its development into a huge mountain symbolizes its universal dominion.

### 1. Who or what is this **STONE**?

This stone is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself said. . .

**Matthew 21:42...** Jesus said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER *stone*'; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES'?"

The sovereign God is going to install His Son as King of kings and Lord of lords!

## 2. What does the stone do?

It crushes all Gentile world powers. The Bible says:

**Revelation 11:15**... Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

## 3. Where does the stone strike?

This is extremely important. The stone strikes the statue on "***its feet of iron and clay.***" (**vs. 34**) Our Lord will establish His kingdom during the last days revived Roman Empire. This final empire will consist of ten kingdoms (or nations) ruling jointly at the time of Christ's return. John the apostle also speaks of this eschatological ten-kingdom confederacy (cf. Rev 13:1; 17:12).<sup>8</sup>

## 4. Why does the stone strike?

Because God's kingdom will be set up. David's rightful King will assume the throne, and He will rule the world for 1000 years. His will be a kingdom of peace and righteousness and justice. Listen, the kingdom of God will fill the earth and it will endure forever!

**Daniel 7:13–14**... "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. **14** "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

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<sup>8</sup> Stephen R. Miller, [\*Daniel\*](#), vol. 18, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 98.



## THE KING'S RESPONSE

**Daniel 2:46–49... Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face and did homage to Daniel, and gave orders to present to him an offering and fragrant incense. 47 The king answered Daniel and said, "Surely your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, since you have been able to reveal this mystery." 48 Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts, and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over all the wise men of Babylon. 49 And Daniel made request of the king, and he appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego over the administration of the province of Babylon, while Daniel was at the king's court.**

Nebuchadnezzar then acknowledged Daniel's God as the greatest God of all, "the ruler over the kings of the earth", and "a revealer of mysteries" because Yahweh was the only God who was "able to reveal this mystery," that is the dream and its interpretation (v. 47). <sup>9</sup>

What a comforting passage this is. In this present world of injustice, wars, and crime, it is reassuring to know that Christ is coming; and when he comes, all the evils of this present age will end. There is indeed coming a day when *"the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"* (Hab 2:14).

The good news is that you and I can be a part of Jesus' spiritual kingdom right here and right now through repentance and faith. Then, when He comes we will reign with Him forever and ever!

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<sup>9</sup> Stephen R. Miller, [Daniel](#), vol. 18, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 103.

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